STATEMENT OF

THE HONORABLE VERNON J. EHLERS
MEMBER
U.S. HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

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Subcommittee
Committee on Appropriations
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H-309 Capitol Building

Thank you, Chairman Mollohan and Ranking Member Wolf, for the opportunity to testify before you today. As ranking member of the Subcommittee on Research and Science Education and, as a member of the House Committee on Science and Technology, I work with my colleagues to support and strengthen several agencies of great importance to our nation's technological innovation capacity. The core of that capacity depends on basic research, and I believe a vigorous research base is crucial to our national economic security. To that end, **I ask you to give high priority to scientific research and development and math and science education in fiscal year 2011 by funding the National Science Foundation (NSF) at $7.4 billion, the National Institute of Standards and Technology (NIST) at $950 million, and the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) at $5.6 billion. For NSF and NIST, these amounts would continue a doubling path for funding for these agencies established as early as 2006.**

I recognize that these are large increases at a time when the outlook for many other agencies and programs is significantly more austere in fiscal year 2011. I believe the sustained commitment to basic research and education will be more challenging this year than ever before, but I sincerely thank this Subcommittee for sharing this commitment in the past.

Since 2006, the Administration and many Members of Congress have sought to put the scientific research agencies on a budget doubling path. The timeline of this doubling has varied from five to ten years, but there has been common agreement that sustained funding increases for science and engineering are key to our national economic competitiveness.

Supporting the NSF is critical to maintaining our pre-eminence in science and technology. NSF investments are aimed at the frontiers of science and engineering, where advances in science and technology underpin our ability to meet many of the challenges that America faces today, including securing the homeland, preventing terrorism, fostering innovation and economic development, and educating our children to be able to compete in the knowledge-based, global economy. $7.4 billion for NSF in fiscal year 2011 will continue this important work.

Next, NIST is one of our nation's most critical science organizations. Almost every federal agency and U.S. industry sector uses the standards, measurements, and certification services that NIST labs provide. The future of many cutting-edge technologies depends on the research and technical expertise of NIST.

I ask that you provide $950 million in fiscal year 2011 for NIST. This sum would allow for an increase to the Manufacturing Extension Partnership (MEP) program which helps our small companies compete in the global economy. In the economic downturn, states like Michigan are struggling to reach the state matching requirement to participate in the program. Increasing the federal share of responsibility would help.

Finally, I ask that you consider funding NOAA at $5.6 billion for fiscal year 2011. This amount will strengthen NOAA's important science, forecasts, and efforts to sustain our oceans and Great Lakes.

In summary, I respectfully urge you to give high priority to scientific research and development and math and science education in fiscal year 2011 by funding the NSF at $7.4 billion, NIST at $950 million, and NOAA at $5.6 billion.

My staff and I would be happy to help answer any further questions you have about these priorities as you prepare the subcommittee's appropriations bill. Thank you again for allowing me to testify today.